

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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8. MORE DISTANT USE FOR NEW EQUIPMENT COULD COME IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONTEXT. IN RECENT YEARS, MOST DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE NIGERIAN INVOLVEMENT CENTERED ON GUINEA-BISSAU, EVENTUALITY WHICH NOW SEEMS OVERTAKEN BY CHANGE OF GOP AND LIKELY G-B ACCESSION TO EARLY INDEPENDENCE. FOR ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE, TOO, FMG SEEMINGLY BELIEVES PROCESS LEADING TO NEGOTIATED INDEPENDENCE HAS BEGUN, AND FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE IS UNLIKELY TO VIEW WITH FAVOR ANY SUGGESTION OF OUTSIDE INTERVENTION.

9. SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEM THUS NARROWS DOWN TO SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA, AND RHODESIA. FMG HAS THUS FAR TAKEN VERY DIM VIEW OF ANY PROPOSALS FOR OAU MILITARY ACTION AGAINST WHITE REDOUBT, AND TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED ANY FORM OF UNILATERAL NIGERIAN MILITARY INITIATIVE. EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE

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NIGERIAN MILITARY LEADERS ARE WELL AWARE OF SHORT-

COMINGS OF THEIR FORCES AND SEVERE LIMITATIONS ON THEIR CAPABILITIES, AND HAVE HAD NO DESIRE INVOLVE THEMSELVES AND THEIR MEN IN WHAT WOULD INEVITABLY BE A FIASCO. THES WHILE NEW EQUIPMENT NOW BEING BOUGHT COULD, IF COMBINED WITH APPROPRIATE TRAINING FOR KEY UNITS, GIVE NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES FOR FIRST TIME CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO OAU EFFORT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT FMG IS LIKELY TO A) MODIFY ITS FUNDAMENTAL VIEW THAT PEOPLE OF THE AREA SHOULD WAGE OWN INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE WITH ONLY FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL HELP FROM OUTSIDE OR B) DEPART FROM ITS DEEP RELUCATNCE TO BECOME ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN WARS OF LIBERATION AGAINST SUPERIOR SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES.

10. NONETHELESS, HTERE ARE SCENARIOS IN WHICH FMG MIGHT PERHAPS BE WILLING SEND FORCES TO SOUTHERN AFRICA, AN OPTION WHICH NEW SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT WILL MAKE POSSIBLE. ONE WOULD BE UNDER UN COVER, IF FOR EXAMPLE UNITS WERE REQUIRED IN CONNECTION WITH EVENTUAL NAMIBIA SETTLEMENT. OTHER, MORE LIKELY, EVENTUALITY WOULD BE NIGERIAN DEFENSIVE ROLE IN SUPPORT OF ZAMBIA OR OTHER "CONFRONTATION STATE" WHICH FACED RHODESIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN THREAT IN WAKE STEPPED-UP GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS TO SOUTH BANK OF ZAMBEZI MIGHT BE MET BY SENDING NIGERIAN FORCE (ALMOST CERTAINLY UNDER OAU BANNER) TO NORTH BANK IN DEFENSIVE CAPACITY. GIVEN INHERENT CAUTION OF SENIOR OFFICERS, HOWEVER, HIGHLY UNLIKELY SUCH HYPOTHETICAL FORCE WOULD EVER ADOPT OFFENSIVE STANCE AND ATTEMPT CROSS RIVER INTO RHODESIA.

11. IN SUM, NEW EQUIPMENT SEEMS LIKELY TO SERVE PRIMARILY TO STRENGTHEN SELF-IMAGE AND INFLUENCE OF NIGERIAN MILITARY ON DOMESTIC SCENE AND TO REINFORCE NIGERIAN CLAIMS TO LEADERSHIP ON AFRICAN STAGE, BUT WILL PROBABLY NEVER BE PUT TO TEST BEYOND COUNTRY'S BORDERS. IF ARMED FORCES EVER DO MOVE OUTSIDE NIGERIA, WHICH SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT MAKES MORE FEASIBLE, THEY WILL

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ALMOST CERTAINLY DO SO IN DEFENSIVE CAPACITY, EITHER IN CONTEXT OF WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL COMMAND OR CONCEIVABLY IN SUPPORT OF " CONFRONTATION STATES" IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. WHILE LATTER WOULD INVOLVE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT WITH SOUTH AFRICA, HIGHLY CONSERVATIVE NIGERIAN MILITARY LEADERSHIP WOULD PRESUMABLY DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MINIMIZE THIS RESK.
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